

of what was to become a thriving community center. Founders had a vision for the community of Midland and its families where local citizens both young and old could come to learn, socialize, and participate in recreational activities.

It is this vision that has helped the West Midland Family Center continued to grow and expand throughout the years. By the generosity of multiple donors and foundations, the WMFC has added a 20,500 square foot building for classrooms, an outdoor pool, a playground, baseball diamonds, and a soccer field. These facilities have enriched the lives of thousands of children, adults, and families throughout the area. After the completion of its most recent expansion project, the WMFC now offers licensed childcare, family support, and afterschool programs. It is because of the guidance and support of countless volunteers and generous individuals that the Center continues to fulfill its mission today.

On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District of Michigan, it is with great honor that I commemorate this 40th anniversary of the West Midland Family Center and congratulate the organization for its many years of success within Midland County. I offer my deepest appreciation to the organization for all it has done and wish it continued success in the future.

IN RECOGNITION OF MS. LINDA ESCOBAR

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2014

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Linda Escobar for her many contributions to Tejano and Conjunto music.

Linda Escobar is a native of Alice, Texas. She and her father, noted conjunto pioneer Eligio Escobar, created an act that toured nationwide with a group of musicians that included Lucha Villa, Jose Alfredo Jimenez, Cantinflas, Los Relampagos and Freddie Fender.

While still a child in the late 1960s, Ms. Escobar composed and recorded the gold record "Frijolitos Pintos." After the death of her father in 1994, Ms. Escobar collaborated with Japanese accordionist Kenji "El Gato" Katsube, to create an electric mix of Asian/Tex-Mex music. Ms. Escobar was awarded Female Vocalist of the Year at the South Texas Conjunto Association Music Awards in both 2001 and 2003.

To pay tribute to her father and other veterans, Ms. Escobar founded "El Veterano Conjunto Festival," now in its 16th year of existence, which raises funds for the Eligio Escobar Scholarship Fund for talented young conjunto musicians.

In recognition of her distinguished musical career, she was inducted into the Tejano ROOTS Music Hall of Fame as well as the Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame. Additionally, she has received numerous other awards and accolades, including a key to the City of Alice.

Known as the First Lady of Conjunto Music, Ms. Escobar has been instrumental in promoting Conjunto Tejano and Tex-Mex music throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to honor Ms. Linda Escobar and her contributions to the Conjunto, Tejano and Tex-Mex genres. Further, I appreciate you joining me in recognizing her contributions to South Texas' cultural heritage.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL JOHN A. LEGGIERI FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES ARMY AND TO OUR NATION

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2014

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Colonel John A. Leggieri for his exemplary dedication to duty and his service to the United States Army and to the United States of America. Colonel Leggieri will retire from the Army in December after serving almost half of his 30-year career in Congressional Liaison.

A native of Claverack, New York, Colonel John Leggieri was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant through Sienna College's ROTC program. Initially branched into Air Defense Artillery, John led Soldiers in demanding situations—first with the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea and then with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He then transitioned to the Quartermaster Corps, where he led Soldiers for the next decade as a logistician in New York, Nebraska, Virginia, and Arkansas.

In 1999, John began the next phase of his career in Congressional Liaison. He initially served as an Army Congressional Fellow for a year, working in a Member's office on Capitol Hill. For the next 14 years he served in positions of increasing responsibility in the critical, fast-paced arena of Congressional Liaison. He worked as Legislative Liaison Officer for the Chief of the Army Reserve and then as Congressional Budget Liaison Officer for the Office of Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management and Comptroller), working closely with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. There are few who know more about the Congressional budget process and none respected more. After his initial work with Congress, John was selected as a National Security Fellow and studied for a year at Harvard University's prestigious John F. Kennedy School of Government in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The Colonel's next role with Congress was as Chief of Congressional Plans and Strategy for the Army's Chief of Legislative Liaison, where he directed the development of long-range Army wide legislative goals and objectives to help clearly communicate the Army's multi-billion dollar annual budget requests. Finally, Colonel Leggieri served as the Chief of Congressional Budget Liaison, where for the last three years he ensured the Army's budget positions were extremely well represented and articulated to the Congressional Appropriations Committees. John's tenure as the Chief of Congressional Budget Liaison coincided with a particularly challenging fiscal period for the Department of the Defense. Under his leadership, the Army's Congressional Budget Liaison Office navigated dramatically declining de-

fense budgets as operations in Iraq and Afghanistan drew down and sequestration was implemented. In spite of these challenges, John was instrumental in ensuring that Congress was informed of the importance of key programs for the future of the Army.

In his many years in the liaison role, John helped showcase the Army's great accomplishments by leading countless high profile Congressional delegations to locations around the world, including Afghanistan, Bosnia, Egypt, Iraq, Kosovo, and innumerable other places where dedicated Americans serve our nation. These fact finding missions have been instrumental in improving the United States' foreign and defense policy.

Colonel Leggieri's leadership throughout his career positively impacted his Soldiers, peers, and superiors. His integrity, his exceptional work, and his sense of service are leaving our world improved and they have always served as an example for those he has commanded. To quote Charles Dickens, Colonel Leggieri is, "as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew."

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in commending Colonel John Leggieri for over three decades of service to his country. We wish John, his wife Rebecca, herself a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel and now Professional Staff Member on the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, and their two children, Olivia and Gabriel, all the best.

HONORING CHIEF MASTER
SERGEANT RICHARD R. ONSGARD

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Chief Master Sergeant Richard R. Onsgard, Command Chief Sergeant for the 146th Airlift Wing for the Channel Islands Air National Guard Station, on the special occasion of his retirement from a distinguished and exemplary career.

Chief Onsgard has had a remarkable and admirable career enlisting in the Air National Guard in 1972, serving the Los Angeles Fire Department for 24 years and rising to the rank of Engineer, and being selected in 1996 as First Sergeant of the 115th Airlift Squadron. Answering his country's call of duty, Chief Onsgard was activated for Operation Noble Eagle and assigned to a Marine Expeditionary Force. In addition to serving on active duty for both Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, Chief Onsgard has supported missions for the National Guard Bureau in many areas including logistics and planning.

As the senior ranking enlisted member of the 146th Airlift Wing, Chief Onsgard has served as the Command Chief and the principal advisor to the wing commander on areas pertaining to the welfare, health, morale, progress, and efficient utilization of all the enlisted members assigned to the wing. In addition to his honorable service, Chief Onsgard has served as the representative to the wing commander and the enlisted force on committees, councils, boards, and has represented the enlisted force at military and civilian functions.